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SECRETARY  
FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

Hartford Centre  
729 Route 83, Ste 307  
Bensenville, IL 60106

www.westforwarding.com  
info@westforwarding.com

TEL 630 787 0350  
FAX 630 787 0377

FMC LICENSE #3118-R  
CHB LICENSE #14627

September 19, 2003

Mr. Bryant L. Van Brackle  
Secretary  
Federal Maritime Commission  
800 North Capitol Street, N.W., Room 1046  
Washington, D.C. 20573

**SUBJECT:** NVOCC Tariff Exemption Petition

Dear Secretary Van Brackle:

W.E.S.T. Forwarding Services is an O.T.I. operating under license number 31185NF.

In this capacity, we respectfully petition the Federal Maritime Commission to grant our NVOCC Industry the much needed exemption from tariff filing.

My company has been in business since 1987 and my experience has been that the filing of tariffs serves no useful purpose whatsoever. It is a costly and cumbersome burden that is imposed on an industry that already faces slim profit margins and high operating costs.

In all the years that we have been in operations, I cannot recall one single instance where customers accessed our tariffs to check if rates had been correctly filed. I can also not recall a single instance in which one of my competitors accessed our tariff to compare our rates to his.

The current system, which, as far as my twenty seven years of experience in this industry is concerned, is likely to result in unintended violations when a clerk or an overseas agent forgets to have a rate filed. The specter of regulatory sanctions causes a permanent and unneeded additional stress in a business that is already very stressful.

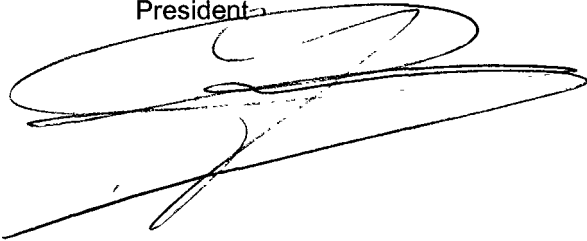
My experience is that most of the export rates need to be negotiated overseas as most of the freight we handle goes collect. With so many OTIs and their agents competing over the same traffics, overseas agents need the flexibility to be able to submit binding offers at a moments notice. Often, this does not leave time for the rate to be filed in the tariff in the U.S. This is particularly the case in our Latin American trade lanes, where the consignees constantly "wheel and deal" and shop around for the best rates for every single transaction.

I remember the day that the airfreight industry became deregulated and we did not have to file rates anymore. The world did not end and this important modernization of the way we conducted business did not result in any negative impact whatsoever on the industry or on the shipping public.

I do hope that the Federal Maritime Commission will make the right decision by eliminating this antiquated and hopelessly useless requirement posed on the providers of an important service to the American shipping public.

Sincerely,

Jean De Keyser  
President

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.